

THE
ABOLITIONISTS VINDICATED
IN A
REVIEW

OF
Eli Thayer's Paper on the New England
Emigrant Aid Company.

By OLIVER JOHNSON.

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of Johnson
p. 61*



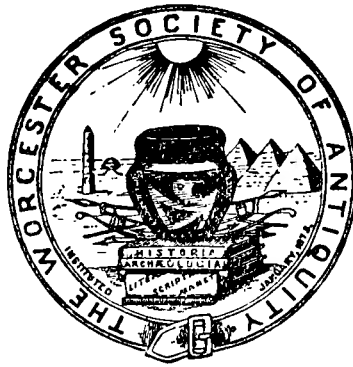
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WORCESTER, MASS. :
FRANKLIN P. RICE, *Publisher.*
MDCCCLXXXVII.

IN a small chamber, friendless and unseen,
Toiled o'er his types one poor, unlearned young man;
The place was dark, unfurnished and mean,
Yet there the freedom of a race began.

Help came but slowly; surely, no man yet
Put lever to the heavy world with less;
What need of help? He knew how types were set,
He had a dauntless spirit and a press.

Such earnest natures are the fiery pith,
The compact nucleus round which systems grow;
Mass after mass becomes inspired therewith,
And whirls impregnate with the central glow.

O Truth! O Freedom! how are ye still born
In the rude stable, in the manger nursed!
What humble hands unbar those gates of morn
Through which the splendors of the new day burst!

* * * * *

O small beginnings, ye are great and strong,
Based on a faithful heart and weariless brain;
Ye build the future fair, ye conquer wrong,
Ye earn the crown, and wear it not in vain!

—*James Russell Lowell's Tribute to Garrison.*

Correspondence.

INVITATION TO MR. MAY

Rev. Samuel May, Leicester, Mass.:—

Dear Sir—We have learned with pleasure that the veteran Garrisonian Abolitionist, Oliver Johnson of New York, has prepared and placed in your hands a review of Hon. Eli Thayer's criticisms on the Garrisonians in his recent address before our Society of Antiquity, upon the Kansas Emigrant Aid Society. And as you are almost the only one of the Old Guard left in this vicinity, and were so long and so closely identified with the Garrisonians, we esteem it eminently fitting that you should read this paper before our Society, and would request you to do so on Tuesday evening, May 10th, in the Natural History Society's hall, in Worcester.

E. B. CRANE, <i>President,</i>	CHARLES E. SIMMONS,
ALBERT TOLMAN, <i>Vice</i>	M. E. BARROWS,
GEO. SUMNER, <i>Presidents.</i>	JAMES L. ESTEY,
WILLIAM F. ABBOT, <i>Secretary,</i>	CALEB A. WALL,
HENRY F. STEDMAN, <i>Treasurer,</i>	EPHRAIM TUCKER,
T. A. DICKINSON, <i>Librarian,</i>	H. W. HUBBARD,
FRANKLIN P. RICE, <i>Editor,</i>	C. G. HARRINGTON,
W. W. RICE,	JOHN C. CRANE,
CLARK JILLSON,	GEORGE F. CLARK,
HENRY M. SMITH,	BERNARD A. LEONARD,
CHARLES R. JOHNSON,	GEORGE MAYNARD,
JOHN C. OTIS,	R. N. MERIAM,
C. G. WOOD,	HENRY G. TAFT,
A. E. P. PERKINS,	JOSEPH A. HOWLAND.

The undersigned are glad to join in the above invitation :—

GEORGE F. HOAR,	O. F. HARRIS,
ADIN THAYER,	ALFRED WYMAN,
SAMUEL WINSLOW,	J. W. FORBUSH,

CHARLES G. REED,
 JOSIAH H. CLARKE,
 G. A. KIMBALL,
 E. D. THAYER, JR.,

JOHN S. BALDWIN,
 E. H. RUSSELL,
 CHARLES C. BALDWIN,
 W. H. RAYMENTON,

and many others.

MR. MAY'S REPLY

To Ellery B. Crane, Esq., President of The Worcester Society of Antiquity:—

Dear Sir:—I duly received the letter of yourself and others, officers and members of The Worcester Society of Antiquity, and signed also by other gentlemen of Worcester, all held by me in high respect, asking that I would read to the Society on the evening of Tuesday, May 10, a paper by Oliver Johnson, Esq., of New York, reviewing the recent address of Hon. Eli Thayer before our Society on the Kansas emigrant movement of 1854, etc., Mr. Johnson being himself unable to read his paper to you from great physical infirmity. I have of late been pleading my years, etc., as reasons for declining calls of a public nature, but such a request as this from my fellow-members of the Society of Antiquity, and those other gentlemen of your city who have lent their names, comes to me not only as a high honor, but also with the force of a command. I feel it to be almost a duty to accept your invitation, and I will do my best to comply with it.

And here I should stop, but for the idea which seems to be entertained in some quarters, that there is a disposition on the part of those I may be thought to represent, to undervalue the work of the Emigrant Society in the contest with slavery. I should respectfully decline your invitation to read my friend Johnson's paper, if I thought it expressed any jealousy of that movement, had a thought of rivalry with it, or any desire to detract from its just and proper credit. I might, indeed, admit that more was accomplished by that emigration, followed up and supplemented as it was by the bold and resolute stand taken by

John Brown and his associates, than the old Anti-slavery society originally expected. But the idea that the Abolitionists proper ever had, or possibly could have had any hostility to any just and probable method of overthrowing or of checking slavery, is not only a mistake, but a very ludicrous and gross one.

The sole reason of Mr. Johnson's paper is the fact that Mr. Thayer, when bringing before the Antiquity Society a history of the Kansas emigration, took the opportunity to introduce a bitter and an extended attack upon Mr. Garrison and his associates. To me, such a use of the opportunity the Society granted him, seems without excuse. I cannot recall any similar case of abuse of opportunity in the meetings of any of our public societies. In this our Society, it stands as the first instance of such discourtesy, and I trust it will ever remain the only one. I am sure that the just claims—the many claims—of Mr. Garrison to honorable and grateful remembrance will not be affected by Mr. Thayer's strange and unwarranted attack. In a free country, the right of dissent and criticism can never be questioned; but detraction and misrepresentation will never be justified. The worst wish I have for Mr. Thayer—and it is also my best—is that he may be soon and heartily sorry for the mistake he has made and the wrong he has done. Let us together rejoice in the downfall of slavery; be profoundly thankful if any word or deed of ours has helped to that end; and set our faces and hands, so long as it is day with us, to the work yet to be done for the redemption of our country.

Respectfully,

Leicester, May 7, 1887.

SAMUEL MAY.

The Society met at Natural History Hall on Tuesday evening, May 10th, to listen to the reading of Mr. Johnson's Review. Mr. May, in opening, said :

"I wish to repeat my thanks to the officers and other members of this Society for the invitation to be with them this evening, and to read—what want of health prevents his reading himself—the paper which Mr. Oliver Johnson of New York has written in review of Hon. Eli Thayer's address, also, and not long since, read to this Society. It is my purpose to comply exactly with your request, reading Mr. Johnson's paper, and refraining from comment of my own. I may, however, briefly say,—since you are all, or nearly all, of a later generation than that in which the great contest against slavery was waged—that Mr. Johnson, the author of the paper I am to read to you, was the editor of a religious journal in Boston called *The Christian Soldier*, at the time that Mr. Garrison issued the first number of *The Liberator*, January 1, 1831. Their offices were in the same building, the old Merchants Hall, at corner of Water and Congress streets. The two editors were soon acquainted, and became friends—a friendship never impaired. Mr. Johnson came not long after to devote himself wholly to the anti-slavery work. He was the youngest of the twelve men who organized the New England Anti-slavery Society, Jan. 6, 1832. He edited *The Liberator*, during the time of Mr. Garrison's two visits to England, in 1833 and 1840; and at other times. He edited the (Ohio) *Anti-slavery Bugle* two years (1849-1851); the *Pennsylvania Freeman* two years (1851-1853); and the *National Anti-Slavery Standard*, the organ of the American Anti-slavery Society, twelve years (1853-1865). On leaving the *Standard* he became managing editor of *The Independent* from 1865 to 1870; subsequently, for two years, of the *Weekly Tribune*; and then, for three years, of *The Christian Union*. Soon after this he wrote the work entitled "Garrison and His Times," which was published in 1880;—a second and enlarged edition appearing in 1881. He has been a constant and industrious writer for the press all his life, and still continues so, though now past his 77th year."

THE ABOLITIONISTS VINDICATED.

The abolition of slavery in the United States was the exclusive work of no individual, society, party, or clique, but an achievement in which vast multitudes of men and women bore a creditable part, though working often on different lines and by divergent methods. The very magnitude of the evil to be removed, its wide ramifications in every department of the national life, and the manifold interests and prejudices aroused by the agitation, made such differences inevitable, and if these sometimes led to unpleasant controversy, we surely need not wonder. In what great reform did human nature ever fail to exhibit itself in this manner?

But, looking back at this day over the history of the struggle, who can fail to see how a guiding Providence utilized every form of earnest and sincere effort for the furtherance of the good cause? Those whose efforts were mainly directed to the regeneration of public sentiment, through an exposure of the immorality and sinfulness of slavery, and an insistence upon the duty of repentance of the sin, and of instant emancipation, could never doubt that they were doing right; while those who magnified political and party action, in one shape or another, were no less certain that their course was dictated by true wisdom.

Remembering all this, any survivor of the conflict, of whatever party, if he aspires to be its historian, should be careful to do no injustice to those who labored for the great end by means different from his own, or in ways that he did not wholly approve. If the

history of the anti-slavery movement is ever worthily written, it will not be a partizan history, setting up exclusive claims for one class of laborers, and seeking to throw others into the shade. Above all it will not seek to perpetuate the memory of unwholesome controversies and personal animosities, arising from the weakness of human nature, and that were hardly of more importance than the driftwood which a broad, clear stream bears upon its surface as it sweeps onward in its course.

Since the death of Mr. Garrison, it has seemed to be my duty to write on several occasions in defence of him and of the movement he founded and led. In doing so I have not been unmindful of the obligation resting upon me to deal justly with those whose methods of opposing slavery did not tally with his, but who, nevertheless, gave proof of sincere devotion to the cause. In this spirit I dedicated my book, "Garrison and his Times," not to his special followers alone, but "to the surviving heroes of the struggle, in whatever field or by whatever instrumentalities they conscientiously labored." This left no one out in the cold; even the founder of the Emigrant Aid Society was included.

Mr. Thayer's sketch of his Emigration Scheme* is marked by another spirit. It is boastful in its tone, exaggerated in its claims, and positively vituperative toward the Abolitionists, who created the agitation which gave him his only hope of success. According to him, that agitation, which began in 1830, and in twenty-four years pervaded the whole land, having forced itself into politics and ecclesiastical assemblies, and created a literature that had found its way into tens of thousands of families in the free States—a literature illustrated by such names as those of Whittier, Garrison, Quincy, Mrs. Child, Jay, Hildreth, Phelps, Mrs. Chapman, Mrs. Stowe, and scores of others hardly less celebrated—had accomplished little or nothing! The Garrisonians had, indeed, done nothing but mischief; the Liberty party, he says, was "a feeble organization," which for a time "had a kind of nebu-

* "The New England Emigrant Aid Company, and its Influence, through the Kansas Contest, upon National History. By Eli Thayer. [*State seal of Kansas*]. Worcester, Mass.: Franklin P. Rice, Publisher. 1887."

lous existence ;” and the Free Soil party, in six years, “had scarcely increased at all either in influence or numbers,” and had “become convinced not only of the futility of its methods, but also of its own feebleness and utter inability to cope successfully with slavery.” At this lamentable crisis, when “apprehension became despondency, and alarm became despair”—to wit: in 1854—“a power, before unknown in the world’s history, was created and brought into use.” that made that year “a controlling or dominating epoch.” “The year 1854,” says Mr. Thayer, “holds this commanding position and governs all our subsequent years.” “This new power,” he tells us, “was an ORGANIZED, SELF-SACRIFICING EMIGRATION. Its mission was to dispute with slavery every square foot of land exposed to its control.”

This claim of Mr. Thayer to be the original discoverer of the plan of “organized and assisted emigration,” as a means of promoting the abolition of slavery, is in flat contradiction of well-established facts. Instead of being “a power unknown to the world’s history” before 1854, and known then only by “revelation” through Mr. Thayer, it was an old idea, which he simply applied to new circumstances and a special emergency. The American Colonization Society was advocated at the North on the ground that, by “organized and assisted emigration,” it proposed to establish colonies on the coast of Africa for the extermination of the slave trade, thereby crippling, if not abolishing slavery by cutting off the supply of slaves. This scheme was commended to the people of New England in hundreds of sermons by eminent preachers, and popularly accepted as sound and wise until Garrison tore off the mask and revealed the true character of the Society. Moreover, Benjamin Lundy, the predecessor of Garrison, lectured and wrote, and traveled thousands of miles, making visits to Hayti and Mexico, and entering into correspondence with their respective governments, hoping thereby to establish a scheme of “organized and assisted emigration” that would eventually ensure the abolition of slavery. Mr. Thayer’s originality, therefore, is limited to the application of an old idea to new circumstances, and for this there would seem to have been small need of a special revelation. The merits of his proposal,

however, let it be freely conceded, do not depend upon its originality. If it accomplished all, or even a part of what he claims, it is none the worse for being old. But, waiving this point, let us see how, according to Mr. Thayer, "the Hour and the Man," in a moment of national discouragement and despair, broke upon the scene. He shall tell the story himself:

"During the winter of 1854, I was," he says, "for the second time, a representative from Worcester in the Legislature of Massachusetts. I had felt to some degree the general alarm in anticipation of the repeal of the Missouri Compromise, but not the depression and despondency that so affected others, who regarded the cause of liberty as hopelessly lost. As the winter wore on, I began to have a conviction which came to be ever present, that something *must* be done to end the domination of slavery. I felt a personal responsibility, and though I long struggled to evade the question, I found it to be impossible. I pondered upon it by day, and dreamed of it by night. What force could be effectively opposed to the power that seemed about to spread itself over the continent? Suddenly it came upon me like a revelation. It was ORGANIZED AND ASSISTED EMIGRATION."

Having disclosed his sudden "revelation" to a meeting of his fellow-citizens in Worcester, by which it was favorably regarded, Mr. Thayer hastened to draw up the charter of the "Massachusetts Emigrant Aid Company," which the Legislature promptly enacted. The charter limited the capital of the Company by no less a figure than \$5,000,000, and the corporators voted to begin operations as soon as the sum of \$1,000,000 should be subscribed. Mr. Thayer at once set himself to the task of raising this sum. There was now to be no waste of time in "mere talk," no imitation of the Abolitionists in "making women and children cry, in anti-slavery conventions, by sentimental appeals;" the "incessant pecking" of the Garrisonians "at the leaves and twigs of the upas tree of slavery"(!) was not to be tolerated; and there was to be "no staying at home and talking of auction-blocks and blood-hounds." The new power revealed to Mr. Thayer in his "ponderings by day and his dreams by night," was not to fritter itself

away in this fashion, but was simply to "GO AND PUT AN END TO SLAVERY"—just that and nothing else! But Mr. Thayer, after all, found there was still need of talk, and at home too! A million dollars was not to be raised without "sentimental" appeals, enforced by allusions to auction-blocks and blood-hounds and other adjuncts of slavery. But Mr. Thayer was not discouraged. In spite of all objections and doubts he ran hither and thither soliciting subscriptions and doing a vast amount of "talking." But just at the moment when success seemed certain, lo! a huge stumbling-block fell across his path. His Boston subscribers, who at first received his "revelation" with enthusiasm, discovered, in a moment of cool reflection, that they were in danger not only of losing their capital, but of making themselves personally responsible for no end of debt! Whether or not their fears originated in any lack of confidence in Mr. Thayer's financial management does not appear; but he tells us the news was to him "a shock like a thunderbolt." Large subscriptions were thereby made unavailable, and he was compelled to take in sail. The Corporation was superseded by a voluntary association of far more moderate pretensions. The prestige of the scheme was greatly diminished. But I will do Mr. Thayer the justice to say that he adhered to it with commendable firmness and enthusiasm, and that the story of its achievements was well worth the telling, if only it could have been told simply, modestly, and impartially, "with malice toward none and charity for all." Its gratuitous and flippant abuse of the Abolitionists, however, makes it nearly worthless as history, and is unaccountable save upon the assumption that Mr. Thayer holds them responsible for his failure to occupy the high niche in anti-slavery history, to which he aspires. But if he has failed of the measure of public appreciation to which he thinks himself entitled, he may be sure it is not their fault, for they have no claims that conflict with his, and no desire to pluck a single laurel from his brow.

They could not, indeed, accept his project in place of their own, or as fairly supplemental thereto. Their movement was characteristically moral and spiritual, making its appeal to the consciences of men; their weapons were peaceful, such as "scat-

tering the living coals of truth on the nation's naked heart," and calling men to repentance for a gigantic sin. Mr. Thayer invited not a moral but a physical conflict, and his weapons were those of war, as symbolized by "Sharpe's rifles," with which many of his emigrants were furnished. He says that the "founder of the Saxon race was nursed by a Polar bear," and that the "untamable ferocity" of that beast is deeply imbedded in their nature. It was to this "grizzly ferocity" that he made his appeal; this it was that he sought to excite. Naturally the Abolitionists distrusted a scheme of which this was the all-pervading spirit. They had hoped for the peaceful abolition of slavery, and to that hope they still clung. They could not themselves begin a war; if it must come, the South should strike the first blow. Moreover the Emigration scheme contemplated no more than the restriction of slavery by preventing the admission to the Union of more slave States; while the Abolitionists could not be satisfied with so narrow a platform, but must still work as best they could for the utter extinction of slavery wherever it existed. Mr. Thayer proposed no more than that the States to be thereafter admitted to the Union should be what was called free; but these, like all the rest, were to be part and parcel of the slave-holder's domain, whereon he might pursue his fugitive chattels by the national authority; while the people of such States were to be bound by the same authority to prevent the slaves from asserting their own freedom. What a mockery to talk of States thus tethered to slavery, as free! There was not, in truth, a free State in all the land. The Constitution and the Union, as then existing, with all their pro-slavery implications, were embraced in Mr. Thayer's scheme. He invoked the "grizzly ferocity" of the Saxons to prevent Kansas from establishing slavery on her own soil, and then proposed to so tame that spirit that it would work humbly and meekly, in the harness of the Constitution, to help the master catch his runaway slave, to suppress slave insurrections by armed force, and to allow the slaveholders to count three-fifths of their chattels as a basis of political power! It was as hopeless to expect that States thus bound by the Compromises of the Constitution could abolish slavery, as that a man with one

foot held fast in a huge steel trap, and both hands manacled, could successfully cope with a wild beast. The Abolitionists had observed the working of this scheme in their own time, and traced it to its beginnings in the Constitution of 1787, and they did not like it. For Kansas they sought a higher freedom than that which Mr. Thayer proposed—a release, in short, from an immoral and degrading Constitutional compact with the Slave Power. The multiplication of States under that compact, every one of them to be bound by oath to keep its territory an open preserve for the slave-hunters, and to send its soldiers, at the call of their Southern masters, to put down slave insurrections, seemed to them a hideous mockery.

Moreover, there was in the Emigration scheme a flavor of craftiness that repelled the Abolitionists. Professing on the one hand to be a “self-sacrificing” project, on the other it flattered its patrons with hopes of great pecuniary profits. “It was intended,” says Mr. Thayer, “to be a money-making affair, as well as a philanthropic undertaking.” “In all my emigration schemes I intended to make the results return a profitable dividend in cash.” In this respect even he must confess that his plan was a failure. Not one of the anticipated “dividends in cash” ever materialized. How many subscribers, won by his alluring, but, alas! too “sentimental” appeals, brought themselves into pecuniary embarrassment, who can tell? It is unquestionable that some of them learned too late that as a financier he was not a success.

One aspect of Mr. Thayer’s movement, however, was fitted to reconcile the Abolitionists to it as a sign of progress. Before his advent, the great objection to them was that they were filling the land with strife; that their intemperate talk and violent measures were calculated to provoke a civil war. The “grizzly ferocity” of the country, which Mr. Thayer esteems so highly as the basal principle of superior natures, had hitherto exerted itself, happily in vain, to put down the anti-slavery movement by means of mob violence. Behold a change! Mr. Thayer had found the Abolitionists quite too slow and peaceful for his fiery nature, and under his lead the men of “grizzly ferocity,” or some of them at least,

were actually proposing to have a hand-to-hand tussle with slavery out in Kansas. So far from being afraid of provoking a war, they were actually inviting it and daring the slaveholders and their minions to come on ! That this was a vast improvement on their former violent opposition to the Abolitionists, who could deny ? The effort to trample out slavery in Kansas was far more honorable than that to trample out the freedom of speech in New England. In this change, indeed, it behooved the Abolitionists to rejoice, as they certainly did, while adhering firmly to their own plans and methods.

According to Mr. Thayer, it was the fault of the Abolitionists that, instead of conciliating the slaveholders, they angered them by "their abusive and insulting manner." But, curiously enough, in reporting his own exploits, he claims with evident pride that *he* made the slaveholders and their tools terribly angry. He even puts in his cap as a fine feather, attesting a true apostleship, the fact that they set a price upon his head ! How it comes to pass that this violent abuse on the part of the slaveholders and their champions proves the wisdom and success of Mr. Thayer's scheme, while the same thing demonstrates only the fanatical folly of Garrison and his friends, I find it difficult to understand. It is, I suppose, one of the things which can only be explained by one who gains "revelations" through "ponderings by day and dreams by night."

It is only fair to say, however, that the Kansas emigration scheme was an interesting episode in the antislavery struggle. It won the support of many men who had before done excellent service in the antislavery cause. I would not be understood to cast a shade of suspicion on Mr. Thayer's own motives in organizing it. He, no doubt, hated slavery, and took what seemed to him the best course to promote its abolition. His scheme, moreover, in spite of all objections, did no doubt render important aid in preventing the establishment of slavery in Kansas, and in augmenting the public sentiment by which the system was at last overthrown. For this let him be awarded due credit and honor. No man who did anything with an honest purpose to promote that great cause should fail of his reward.

It is not for this that I complain of Mr. Thayer, but for his gratuitous and shameful vituperation of men and women whose long and faithful service in the cause of freedom entitles them, at the very least, to his respect, if not his admiration. But for this I should have let his extravagant claims for his own scheme pass without observation, though in themselves they invite and even provoke criticism.

Some of Mr. Thayer's flagrant misrepresentations demand attention; not, however, on personal but on purely historical grounds. When he says the Abolitionists, or "some of their friends, still claim that Garrison and his associates founded the Liberty and Free Soil parties," he makes an accusation which has no warrant in any claim advanced by them, or by any of their number. It is notorious that the Abolitionists, though earnestly desiring to promote political action against slavery, opposed the "founding" of the Liberty party as likely to retard, rather than hasten, such action. The Abolitionists of England had won their victory without organizing a political party; why could not the Abolitionists of this country win theirs in the same way? Whether they were right or wrong in this, I do not now say. I am dealing with history, and therefore confine myself to the exact facts. What the Abolitionists have said, and still say, is, that the Liberty party was the offspring of the antislavery agitation begun by Garrison in 1830: and I affirm that of all the men who participated in its original organization, there was not one who had not been identified with that agitation, and was not indebted to it for his interest in the subject. Who were James G. Birney, Elizur Wright, Henry B. Stanton, John G. Whittier, Amos A. Phelps, Samuel E. Sewall, Alvan Stewart, John Pierpont, Charles T. Torrey, Orange Scott, and scores of other Liberty party men, but Garrisonian Abolitionists before 1840? The same is true, but in a lesser degree, of those who organized the Free Soil party. The assertion that the Abolitionists "hated the champions of these parties more than they hated the slaveholders," is a calumny. They looked upon them as men working in a good cause, but not by the wisest and best means. Sharp things were said by both parties, but there was never a time when fraternal relations were

not maintained by leaders on both sides of the fence. The Liberty party men, or some of them, in seceding from the Abolitionists, were thought to have treated them unjustly; and this, rather than hostility to their political course, led to some unpleasantness, of which it is needless to speak here.

Mr. Thayer characterizes the movement led by Garrison as "sentimental," and says it "never attained the dignity or influence of a party, or even a faction." "The actors in it," he says, "were a cabal, active, noisy, and pugnacious, but never effective." Now, as we have seen, most of the leaders of the Liberty party were prominent either as officers or members of that same Garrisonian "cabal," for longer or shorter terms, before 1840. Had it "no dignity or influence" while they belonged to it? Were Birney and Wright and Stanton and Pierpont of no account while rejoicing to be numbered with the Abolitionists who followed the lead of Garrison? Did the Liberty party men become respectable only when they began to form a political party, and accept nominations to political office? Mr. Thayer, it will be seen, handles his blunderbuss very unintelligently, not seeming to know whom he is likely to hit, or whether it is made to explode at the muzzle or the breech.

On page 32, I encounter this very remarkable statement: "At the time of the repeal of the Missouri Compromise, and the Kansas-Nebraska bill, that peculiar clique, known as the Garrisonian Abolitionists, had been absolutely silent." I do not wish to be discourteous, but it is impossible properly to characterize this statement without branding it as wholly and stupidly false. The files of their newspapers and the records of their conventions may be appealed to for evidence that the measures in question excited their hottest indignation, as fresh illustrations of the absurdity and folly of attempting to unite freedom and slavery in one and the same system of government.

On page 12, I find this statement: "Demanding immediate emancipation, they [the Abolitionists] strove to retard the overthrow of slavery. Contending for the dissolution of the Union as the only means of destroying slavery, they saw slavery destroyed not only without their aid, but against their protest, while the

Union was preserved and made harmonious." What a travesty of the truth is here ! As if the Union established by means of the war, and in which the whole land rejoices to-day, were the same that the Abolitionists denounced ! My friend Frederick Douglass shall expose this absurdity for me. Speaking in Philadelphia, at a meeting of the American Anti-Slavery Society, in December, 1863, he said :

" Men talk about saving the Union, and restoring the Union as it was. They delude themselves with the miserable idea that the old Union can be brought into life again. That old Union, whose canonized bones we so quietly inurned under the shattered walls of Sumter, can never come to life again. The first ball shot at Sumter caused it to fall as dead as the body of Julius Cæsar when stabbed by Brutus. What business, then, have we to fight for the old Union ! We are not fighting for it. We are fighting for something incomparably better. We are fighting for unity of institutions, in which there shall be a solidarity of the nation, making every slave free, and every man a voter."

As Mr. Douglass was a leading Free Soiler and Republican as well as an Abolitionist, perhaps Mr. Thayer may acknowledge that his opinion is entitled to some weight.

Mr. Thayer assumes not only that the Union existing before the war is the same that exists to-day, but also that the disunion advocated by the Abolitionists was identical with Southern secession ; and he says, " they respected the halter too much " to continue their advocacy of it after the war began. But, the old Union being dead by the act of the South herself, the Abolitionists simply recognized the fact, and turned their attention to the work of shaping the new Union that was to follow the war. Why should they beat a dog already dead ? Glad indeed were they to be relieved from any further necessity of advocating disunion, and to take their place thenceforth with the masses of the Northern people in resisting the restoration of the old Union, and in the construction of the new one. How much better it would have been for the Northern cause if the Republican party had sooner discovered that the old Union was dead beyond the power of resurrection ! What precious time was wasted, what precious blood spilled, in abortive

attempts to patch up that Union, and coax the South back by assurances, on the part of Republican leaders, that they would carefully observe, in time to come, all the pro-slavery compromises of the Constitution! Let us be grateful for the heaven-sent madness that inspired the South at that time, and but for which this might now be a slaveholding and slave-hunting nation.

And why did the South spurn these offers of fresh compromises? Simply because she knew that she could not trust the Republican party to fulfil them. Behind that party she saw the Abolitionists, who would not give up their agitation for one moment, and who were sure in time to evoke another anti-slavery party too stern to be subdued either by their blandishments or their threats. I make no boasts, but whatever may have been the faults or the mistakes of Garrison and his associates, their attitude at this time was of immense service to the country; and this, doubtless, was what President Lincoln meant when, addressing Gov. Chamberlain of South Carolina, he attributed emancipation not alone to the fidelity of the soldiers, but to the "logic of Garrison." The men who fought the old Union witnessed a good confession. They spurned a Constitution which, grand as it was in most particulars, yet contained the seeds of the civil war. They saved the North from the folly and the shame of replanting those very seeds at the moment when their first fruits were ripening before us in a harvest of carnage and blood.

In charging the Abolitionists with "doing nothing" for the final overthrow of slavery, Mr. Thayer, I suppose, means to taunt them with standing aloof from the war. The taunt, if so meant, is base, for thousands of them did go to the war, and many of them endured the horrors of the Southern prison-pens, while others were buried in Southern soil. Wide as is my acquaintance with the families of the Abolitionists, I can hardly remember one that was not thus bereaved. One of Mr. Garrison's sons was a faithful soldier, periling his life to redeem his country from slavery. The notion that the Garrisonian Abolitionists were all non-resistants is a very mistaken one, for only a few of them were such. When the Government at Washington ceased

its efforts to restore "the Union as it was," and had put the war openly and avowedly on an anti-slavery footing, many of them rushed into "the imminent deadly breach," happy in imperiling their lives for the salvation of their country.

On page 13, Mr. Thayer brands the Abolitionists as "a fraternity of mountebanks," than which "no other ever lived so long, or worked so hard, or did so little." Among these "mountebanks" were such men as Garrison, Wendell Phillips, Ellis Gray Loring, Theodore D. Weld, Edmund Quincy, James Mott, Samuel J. May, Charles Follen, Samuel Fessenden, Francis Jackson, Robert Purvis, David Lee Child, James Miller McKim, Effingham L. Capron, Adin Ballou, James N. Buffum, Sidney Howard Gay, Theodore Parker, Edward M. Davis, John T. Sargent, Samuel May, William P. Atkinson, and many others equally worthy of mention ; and such women as Lydia Maria Child, Maria Weston Chapman, Eliza Lee Follen, Susan Cabot, Lucretia Mott, Abby Kelley Foster, Mary Grew, Sarah and Angelina Grimké, Anne Warren Weston, Catharine Sargent, Sarah Shaw Russell, and hundreds of others equally devoted and self-sacrificing. Who is Mr. Thayer, that, like Shimei, he should come forth to stigmatize with insulting epithets such men and women as these ?

On page 33, Mr. Thayer asserts that the Abolitionists "assailed every practical and feasible measure, and everybody who proposed to do something for the cause of freedom." He seems incapable of understanding the difference between earnest discussion of principles and criticism of methods, and the personal detraction which soils his own pages. That the debates between the Garrisonians and those who differed from them never transcended the bounds of Christian courtesy, I will not say ; but I do affirm that those debates rarely interrupted the pleasantest social intercourse and mutual consultation for the good of the cause. In many ways the parties coöperated heartily, and when they differed, did so with mutual respect and confidence. The leaders of the Republican party, Sumner, Giddings, Wilson, John P. Hale, Chase, and others, were careful readers of the Garrisonian papers, and frequently expressed their high appreciation of the influence they exerted in keeping the Republican party from flagging in its

work. They recognized the great usefulness of an anti-slavery organization entirely free from political party entanglements and not tempted to swerve from the line of duty from the love of office or political power. Often did Mr. Sumner, as I can personally testify, seek the intervention of the Abolitionists to prevent the Republican party from making shipwreck of its own cause, either through tardy and reluctant action, or by some unworthy compromise. As John G. Whittier has truly said, the "moral leadership" of Garrison was recognized among political workers as well as others of the anti-slavery household.

Has Mr. Thayer forgotten that when Charles Sumner was passing in triumph through the streets of Boston, bearing upon his person the wounds inflicted by the bludgeon of Preston Brooks, and under injunction from his physicians to protect his head carefully from the wind, he would yet take off his hat to Garrison the instant he recognized his form and features in the crowd? Did Mr. Sumner select a "mountebank" out of all the citizens of Boston on that day as the only one to whom he would pay special honor? In 1863, moreover, Mr. Sumner, writing to Mr. Garrison, said: "You and your associates have stood firm for many years. Such pious fidelity must have its reward in an approving conscience; but it cannot be forgotten hereafter on earth or in heaven." In still stronger terms, at the same date, Henry Wilson and Henry Ward Beecher expressed their appreciation of the Garrisonian movement, with which they had often coöperated on lines common to all earnest opponents of slavery; and not these alone, but many more of the same faith, have borne generous testimony to the value of the movement which Mr. Thayer so flippantly maligns.

Again, on page 33, after repeating his charge that the Abolitionists actually did nothing to overthrow slavery, he declares that when the work had been done "in spite of them," "they and their admirers turned about and coolly said: 'WE DID ALL THIS OURSELVES.' The present generation has, in consequence of the persistent clack and endless scribbling of that class, come to believe that Mr. Garrison was the Alpha and Omega of the anti-slavery struggle, and that he and his small party of followers

were the leaders and directors of the great movement that brought about the overthrow of slavery." In support of this allegation he quotes (page 12,) from a letter of the late Mr. A. H. Waters, these sentences: "For twenty years the press has been teeming with their [the Abolitionists] effusions, in poetry and prose, to convince the world that they abolished slavery! They have done much to falsify history, and produce wrong impressions on the rising generation."

I am constrained to say that these accusations have in them no element of truth. The accuser, if required to substantiate them by specific proofs, would stand speechless and confounded. Neither Mr. Garrison himself nor any of his friends has ever advocated any such boastful pretensions as are here ascribed to them. No such "effusions in poetry and prose" as Mr. Waters describes can anywhere be found. It is Mr. Thayer himself who is the boaster; witness his claim that he and his scheme "created and brought into use a power, before unknown in the world's history," which made the year of its discovery a "dominating epoch" in anti-slavery history; which "stopped the making of slave States, made the Republican party, solidified the Northern States against slavery, drove the slaveholders into secession, gave us a harmonious and enduring Union, emancipated the white race of the South, as well as the negroes, and is even now regenerating the South." I submit that the man who thus boasts of his own achievements, and whose pages fairly bristle with the perpendicular pronoun "I" in every form of ostentation, is hardly the man to rebuke the Abolitionists for setting up unfounded claims in their own behalf.

How different the spirit of Garrison, who could never listen to praises of himself without a protest, who never by word or look betrayed a consciousness of leadership over his fellows, and who, when his English admirers singled him out for special honors, replied in such words as these: "I must here disclaim, with all sincerity of soul, any special praise for anything that I have done. I have simply tried to maintain the integrity of my soul before God, and to do my duty. I have endeavored to save my country from ruin. I have sought to liberate such as were held captive in

the house of bondage. But all this I ought to have done." Of his fellow-laborers, he said : "Nothing can be said to their credit which they do not deserve. But whatever has been achieved through them is all of God, to whom alone is the glory due."

Of course, those who have made contributions to anti-slavery history could do no less than state the notorious fact that Garrison was the first to repudiate the delusion of gradualism, and found a movement in this country for the abolition of slavery upon the principle of immediate emancipation as the right of the slave and the duty of the master. They have also stated that the agitation thus founded aroused the attention of the country, as nothing had ever done before, to the subject of slavery ; that it found the country fast asleep over its sin and its shame ; that it speedily filled the land with wholesome excitement, and finally created a public sentiment that made itself felt in the churches and the political parties, and that led, through a division of forces, to the organization of the Liberty and other political anti-slavery parties ; and, finally, that it was continued with unremitting zeal and devotion to the very end of the conflict, criticising those parties for their inconsistencies and shortcomings, stimulating their moral purpose, and kindling a fire behind them which made retreat on their part impossible. As the end drew near, the political party workers came to a clearer and truer appreciation of the labors of Garrison and his friends ; President Lincoln recognized their service in creating the public sentiment that prepared the way for his proclamation of freedom ; Garrison was welcomed at the White House, and honored with an official invitation to witness the raising of the flag on Sumter ; and finally, when the rebellion had been completely suppressed, the Republican leaders joined in a spontaneous movement to raise a National Testimonial to Mr. Garrison, in the form of a fund for his maintenance during the remainder of his life. If the man who boasts of having made the year 1854 the "dominating epoch" in the conflict with slavery took no part in this testimonial, it yet had the hearty coöperation of such men as Chief Justice Chase, Senators Seward, Sumner and Wilson, Gov. Andrew, Samuel E. Sewall, Alexander H. Bullock, Francis W. Bird, Henry W. Longfellow, Ralph Waldo Emerson,

James Russell Lowell, William M. Evarts, John Jay, Henry W. Bellows, Horace Greeley, and William Cullen Bryant. Mr. Thayer will therefore perceive that, according to his logic, it is the most eminent leaders of the Republican party, if anybody, whose "clack" has done so much to "falsify history and produce wrong impressions on the rising generation," as to the place of Garrison in the anti-slavery movement. Are they, too, "mountebanks?"

It is not too much to say that the principal founders and leaders of the Republican party were men who had been abolitionized more or less thoroughly and consciously by the moral agitation led by Garrison. Especially was this true of Sumner, Wilson, Andrew and Giddings, and of very many others. Many more had been instructed and influenced in the same way, though to a less degree than they. But, as a matter of course, the party drew to its ranks some who took with them not a little of their old hatred of the Abolitionists, who had pricked their consciences and made their position in the old parties uncomfortable, while they were as yet comparatively indifferent to the ethical issues involved in the question. Some of these, being in the main politicians rather than reformers, retained their hostility to the Abolitionists to the very last, and to this day those who still survive can never speak of them but in terms of vituperation, such as seem to be natural to Mr. Thayer. But the Republican party was not led by this class. The real leaders, in spite of their differences with the Abolitionists, respected them for their consistency, fidelity and boldness, and recognized their agency in fostering and developing the public sentiment on which the party depended for success. Not only they, but hundreds and thousands of the rank and file, read the Garrisonian papers with eager interest, attended the Garrisonian meetings, and made liberal contributions to keep up the moral agitation. They saw that the most thoroughly abolitionized communities were those in which Republicanism was invariably of the staunchest and most reliable quality, and they would have felt that only half their duty to their party was done if they had not made liberal contributions to the Garrisonian treasury. Massachusetts was always overwhelmingly Republican, because there the Abolitionists had done

their most powerful work, the people generally understood the nature and bearings of slavery, and were prepared to oppose it by every constitutional means. In Connecticut, on the other hand, the party was always fighting a doubtful battle, because the abolitionism of that State, except in one County, was of a diluted, half-and-half sort. I have not made a close examination of the facts, but I risk little in saying that for years the Republican majority in the whole of Connecticut was almost never larger than it was in the single County of Windham, where the people had been abolitionized by the Bensons and Burleighs, by Samuel J. May and Garrison himself. Joshua R. Giddings understood this matter well, and therefore took the Garrisonian lecturers in his own carriage to the different parts of his Congressional district, and introduced them to the people. In his good-humored way he said to these lecturers, "You beat the bush, and I will catch the birds," thus intimating his shrewd belief that the converts they made would not accept the whole Garrisonian doctrine at first, but begin their opposition to slavery by voting with the Republican party! Once a corps of Garrisonian lecturers went to work to "whiten out," as they said, the "black belt" of Ohio, Indiana and Illinois, leading Republicans furnishing a large portion of the funds necessary for the purpose. The plan was carried out in the most fraternal spirit, and to the satisfaction of both parties. The philosophy of all this is not far to seek. The Garrisonian protest against the Constitution itself, as a "covenant" for the protection of slavery (first distinctly formulated in 1844), made demands upon voters which few were ready to meet. They could be persuaded of the sinfulness of slavery and of the duty of doing *something* for its removal; but when they were asked to renounce the ballot as implying an oath to support slavery, they shrank from the proposition as altogether too hard for them. The Abolitionists themselves had been slow in coming to this ground, and therefore were patient with the slowness of others. They were content to inspire in the breasts of men a genuine hatred of slavery, and to leave that sentiment to express itself in such action as individual consciences might dictate. It rarely happens that masses of men move together on the highest moral plane, or

follow out any truth to its ultimate results. They see in part and they prophesy in part. So it was in this case. Converts did not embrace at once the full ethical gospel of anti-slavery, but hoped that less radical measures than those demanded by the Abolitionists might prove effective, and so tarried in the Republican party. The Abolitionists, while seeing that this was done conscientiously, rejoiced over every voter whom they could win from the pro-slavery to the anti-slavery side, and were glad to coöperate, to this extent, with the Republican party; while the sagacious leaders of that party were glad to be helped in this way.

One other point in Mr. Thayer's indictment claims a moment's attention. Over and over again he refers to the attitude of the Garrisonians in respect to the churches, as if it had been phenomenally unreasonable and wicked. But he carefully remembers to forget that it was not Garrison, but James G. Birney, Presbyterian Elder, and Liberty party candidate for President, who said, "The American Churches are the Bulwarks of American Slavery"—an accusation that more than covers and justifies all that any Garrisonian ever said of them. Could any assault upon the "bulwarks" of slavery have been either unjust or undeserved? Was it nothing that bodies claiming to speak in the name of God and Christ prostituted even the Bible to the support of a system which John Wesley branded as "the sum of all villanies?"

It may be observed that Mr. Thayer's "dominating epoch" witnessed a phenomenon quite as significant and far more important in its effects than the Emigrant Aid Company—to wit, a complete change of front on the part of a large body of the clergy. Up to that time they had apologized for slavery, and sought by every form of ecclesiastical artifice and influence to suppress the anti-slavery agitation. But the excitement produced by the new fugitive slave law, and the repeal of the Missouri Compromise, convinced them that further continuance in such a course was sure to bring them to disgrace and ruin, and they made an excuse of these new encroachments of the Slave Power to change their attitude. They had got themselves into a morass, in which they were sinking deeper every day, and they resolved to get out while

yet there was time. They rushed into Congress and the newspapers with their protests, talking for all the world as if they had always been the most conspicuous opponents of slavery. The Abolitionists, while rejoicing in this change, and not disposed to question its sincerity, could not help being amused by it. But the pretence in later times that the anti-slavery movement had its beginning then and there, in “the grand uprising of the clergy,” and that the previous twenty-four years of agitation, discussion and conflict were of no account—of no value in settling principles and preparing for action—is enough to put even Impudence itself to the blush !

In concluding this paper, I venture to express the hope, in view of my lifelong relations to the anti-slavery movement and its champions, that this work of their defence has been not unfitly assumed by me. In the performance of my task I trust I have violated no obligation either of courtesy or fairness, as I am sure I have in no way sought to evade or set aside the truth of history.

[Mr. JOHNSON may be addressed to the care of *The Evening Post*, 210 Broadway, New York.]

At the close of the reading of Mr. Johnson's Review, HON. W. W. RICE was called upon, and said :

To those of us who know him, the gentle, upright and steadfast character of the gentleman who has read the paper, is a guaranty that the old Anti-Slavery agitators, with whom he associated himself in the prime of his life, could not have been very bad men.

Thirty-three years ago I had my office on the middle floor of the building in which we are now assembled, and was Secretary of the Worcester County Emigrant Aid Society. Mr. Thayer was unquestionably its originator. He loved notoriety and noise, and was a born speculator. He thought the scheme could be made money-making, and probably had his eye on corner lots in the proposed city of Lawrence.

Mr. Branscomb was sent out as a surveyor, to select a site for the city—which he did, and named it Lawrence, from Amos A. Lawrence of Boston, who furnished most of the money for the undertaking. Mr. Branscomb was afterwards U. S. Consul for many years in one of the cities of England, I think Manchester.

Dr. Charles Robinson, of Fitchburg, led the first company of emigrants to Kansas. He was a bold and fearless man. When the border ruffians approached his little settlement, thinking to wipe it out, they found Robinson and his men in line, armed with rifles. They demanded that he should surrender his rifles. He responded that he would compromise—keep the rifles, and give the border ruffians the contents. He was first Governor of the State, and still lives in the State he founded, with a handsome competency, and the respect of all.

Later, one snowy afternoon, another party started from my office, armed with Sharpe's rifles. It was led by a short, thick-set man, wearing a sealskin cap. He was S. C. Pomeroy, afterwards U. S. Senator from Kansas, and he still lives in Washington. In one of these parties went a restless man, last from North Brookfield, whose family soon followed him. Dudley Haskell was his son,

who afterwards came to Congress from Kansas, worked his way well to the front, was one of the ablest defenders of Protection on the floor, and died three or four years ago, fairly worn out by hard work. I think Kansas lost her best man when Haskell died.

Mr. Thayer got tired pretty soon, became an advocate of Squatter Sovereignty, and tried to carry the Worcester District for it. We all remember how he failed in this attempt.

The Worcester County Emigrant Aid Society had but small funds and its officers received no salary. Mr. William A. Wheeler collected and handed to me some \$13.00, which went for incidental expenses. That was all the funds it had.

I remember well the old abolitionists. I came very near being one myself. The first speech I ever made was at an abolitionist tea party, and I was introduced by Mr. May. He praised my speech, which set me up not a little.

We have not yet forgotten Parker Pillsbury, the brothers Burleigh, Stephen Foster and Mrs. Foster.

Those abolitionists were the flails of God by which the wheat of freedom was pounded from the chaff. They were the John the Baptists, crying in the wilderness to prepare the way. They were the picket line, breaking the paths and clearing away the brush for the great army which pressed on behind them. No men of that generation are held to-day in higher honor than Garrison, and Phillips and May.

MR. JOSEPH A. HOWLAND was called on to give reminiscences of the "Butman Riot," of 1854, which he did, giving some details of the driving out of town of Deputy U. S. Marshal Asa O. Butman, of Boston, who had three years before arrested Thomas Sims in Boston as a fugitive slave, and he was returned to slavery, in the face of thousands of excited and remonstrating citizens, under the escort of U. S. marines and soldiers, with artillery guarding the procession, which was headed by the U. S. Marshal, assisted by the City Marshal and a large force of police.

It was supposed that Butman had come to Worcester to arrest as a fugitive slave, W H. Jenkins, a barber of some years residence who had been recognized by a customer from his former southern home. And thousands of indignant citizens gathered to prevent his making any arrest and to require him to leave town with the pledge never to return. He was followed to the station by the large and excited crowd, protected from bodily harm by a special guard of Garrisonian Abolitionists.

And this, Mr. Howland said, was a mob ! defying the law, and setting aside the compromises of the Constitution.

Mr. Butman was an officer of the law, armed with its warrants, a law made to execute the provisions of the U. S. Constitution, and these citizens of Worcester set this Constitution aside, and unmindful of its obligations, dissolved their union with the slaveholding South, that required them to give up their free soil as open hunting ground for escaped slaves, and, indeed, to aid in their capture ; or when captured, to stand idly by and see Thomas Sims marched from the Court House in Boston, down State street, by the old State House, and over the spot where the first blood of the Revolution was shed, to the slave ship that lay at Long Wharf, to receive him and carry him back to the hell of slavery from whence he had escaped. And afterwards, in 1854, Anthony Burns, another escaped slave, was marched over the same route with similar formality.

Revolting at these legal and constitutional obligations, the Garrisonians sought to dissolve the Union that required them. But while they were able to arouse an active anti-slavery sentiment through the North, they could not bring the free states to an open dissolution of the Union. At last the South, in fear of the aroused indignation of the North, in insane madness, took the initiative and themselves broke the bonds of the Union, and the Abolitionists, freed from the objectionable obligations, at once labored loyally and patriotically to reconstruct and build up the new Union of Freemen and Freedmen in which there could never again be a slave or a slaveholder.

